

Jonathan Hale, Architect and Writer

Architect and writer Jonathan Hale is author of *The Old Way of Seeing -- How Architecture Lost Its Magic and How to Get It Back*. *The Old Way of Seeing* explores what makes architecture, old and new, ordinary and monumental, come alive. The general audience book investigates the underlying causes of the "therelessness" of so many built landscapes of our age, and it argues that the real meaning of aesthetics -- to be fully awake to the world -- is as important today as ever. Hale's premise is that a high level of design ability is innate in most people, as can be seen in most pre-industrial communities, but that it only becomes available when we look at a building as a pattern in light and shade. The theory has a close parallel in Betty Edwards' well-known work on drawing, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*. The process of successful design is primarily playful and intuitive -- Hale defines intuition as innate wisdom. In creating a building intuitively as a play of pattern, the designer works with a system of geometric proportions in the same largely unconscious way that a songwriter works with musical proportions. While this approach to design has antecedents in Classical, Gothic, and Renaissance architecture, it also has strong ties to the American Emersonian tradition, whose great architectural exponent was Frank Lloyd Wright.

Architecture and democracy both come from reason, the intuitive judgment that goes beyond calculation. The words "reason" and "ratio" share the same Latin root. Reason is seeing in proportion. Reason, intuitive judgment, comes ahead of intellect. It is the nature of architecture to join intellect and intuition; but intuition must govern, or the building will feel dead. Architecture is always in tension between intellectual use and intuitive pattern. The rain has to stay out and the building has to sing.

A building is play. Play, mystery, opportunity, mastery. Jefferson gave play its proper place when he made happiness one of the three highest principles of democracy. He was, after all, an architect. Jefferson derived the famous rights of the Declaration from "life, liberty, and property," John Locke's English formulation of many years before 1776. But property, Jefferson saw, has nothing to do with fundamental principle; property is merely in the service of life, which must play. Our Declaration at its simple deepest makes the national goal the protection, not of our livelihood, but of our liveliness.

From The Old Way of Seeing

Jonathan Hale has been a practicing architect since the early 1970s. His current work includes design guidelines for new communities in Wilmington, NC and Spokane Valley, WA, working with teams of non-architect builders. His architectural work includes single and multifamily housing, adaptive reuse, and manufactured housing. His office is in Watertown, MA. Jonathan Hale has a BA in Architectural Sciences from Harvard College, and did his graduate work at Columbia University School of Architecture and the Boston Architectural Center, from which he graduated in 1975. *The Old Way of Seeing*, a Publishers Weekly Best Book of the 1994, was published by Houghton Mifflin. Jonathan Hale has published many articles on architecture, has lectured widely and has appeared on many radio and television programs.

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